Nejimaki no Niwa

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Chapter 3
DEAR MOM,
I'VE PRETTY MUCH ADJUSTED TO LIFE IN ROSA ACADEMY
THE SCHOOL IS A WORLD OF ITS OWN, SURROUNDED BY NOTHING BUT WOODS. THE STUDENTS ARE A MIXED BUNCH, TOO. THEY COME FROM ALL OVER THE PLACE.
MOST OF THEM HAVE BEEN AROUND SINCE LOWER SCHOOL. NEW STUDENTS LIKE ME ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN.
RAUM ORLANDO (MY ROOMMATE) SAYS IT'S NOT UNUSUAL FOR STUDENTS TO BE ENROLLED HERE AS A FAMILY TRADITION
(I KNOW MY OLDER BROTHER HAD A ROOM TO HIMSELF, BUT ONLY SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS CAN GET SINGLE ROOMS.)

Chapter 3

HUH?
Tulli!
I'LL WRITE AGAIN
SAY HI TO MY SISTERS FOR ME.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WE'RE RUNNING LATE HERE!
I'LL BE A MINUTE!
rise

chatter
chatter
DID YOU HEAR ABOUT OUR LATEST MUSIC PROJECT? THE ENTIRE CLASS IS GOING TO PERFORM AN ORCHESTRAL
YOU MIGHT WANT TO CALL FIRST DIBS ON THE PART YOU'RE GOOD AT.
GOOD, AT?
ANYBODY ELSE WANT THE CELLO PART?
YEAH, ME
THE CLARINET PART FOR THAT PIECE IS COMPLICATED ISN'T IT?
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?
BETTER HURRY UP TULLI YOU'RE RUNNING OUT OF OPTIONS.
Or are you OK with anything?
YAN...
IS THERE A "CAN'T PLAY" OPTION?
...

THE ONLY PARTS LEFT ARE THE PIANO, THE VIOLINS AND THE WINDS
...
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU'VE TOUCHED A VIOLIN BEFORE?
TOUCHED
YEAH.
MY SISTERS USED TO DRAG ME ALONG TO THEIR LESSONS
THAT WAS IT.
Don't drool on my pillow.
THIS IS A BAD TIME TO START LEARNING A COMPLEX INSTRUMENT.
JUST WHY DID I SAY NO WHEN MY FOLKS TRIED TO MAKE ME TAKE UP ART AND MUSIC? I FEEL LIKE KICKING MYSELF.
sulk
sulk
WHAT A DRAMA QUEEN.

I NEVER TOOK FORMAL LESSONS YOU KNOW. I CAN'T TEACH A TOTAL BEGINNER.
WOULDN'T WANT TO PASS ON MY BAD HABITS.
YOU COULD ASK KAREL TO TEACH YOU.
He's good.
HOW ABOUT PIANO? IT'S ALL ABOUT SWEEPING THE KEYS.
HEY, GUYS?
AREN'T YOU FORGETTING THE PIANO PART IS A SOLO? AS IN, WAY OUT OF MY LEAGUE?
RIGHT.
SORRY I'LL COME AND TALK TO YOU GUYS LATER.
SWING
dash
dash
OH, OK
!
ding dong
FEEDING TIME!
FEEDING?

SHUT
dash dash
WHAT'S GOING ON?
DON'T KNOW.
shuffle
shuffle
flut
AND THERE YOU HAVE IT. I'M IN A TIGHT SPOT.
WELL... IT'S WORSE FOR YOU.
YOU GOT SEPARATED FROM YOUR MOM AND THE REST OF THE LITTER BEFORE YOU FOUND YOUR WAY HERE, DIDN'T YOU?
I HOPE YOU GET TO MEET YOUR FAMILY AGAIN SOON

YIPES!
TULLI!
YAN? WH— WHAT?
THAT A STRAY CAT? BEEN FEEDING IT, HAVE YOU?
Thump
Thump
Thump
HUH?
OH, I HAVE SOME NEWS ABOUT THE PERFORM-ANCE THING
YEAH
I FOUND HIM JUST THE OTHER DAY
WERE YOU LOOKING FOR ME?
MEOW
THINK YOU'RE UP TO PLUCKING THE VIOLIN?
YOU SEE, THE TEACHER SAID HE COULD TWEAK THE SCORE FOR BEGINNERS.
LET'S START PRACTICING IN ONE OF THE MUSIC ROOMS TOMORROW

YAN...
You're the man!
ANYWAY, I ASKED HIM TO TINKER WITH MINE, AND YOURS, TOO,
WHILE I WAS AT IT.
HE SAID MUSIC ROOM 2 IS OPEN FOR US TO USE.
GREAT!
Slide
WHICH VIOLIN ARE YOU?
UM, RW—
OH!

WHERE ARE THE SCORES FOR PRACTICE?
THE VIOLIN ONES ARE ON THAT SHELF.
ARE YOU USING THIS ROOM?
NO, I'M ONLY HERE TO LOOK FOR SHEET MUSIC.
...
ARE YOU PRACTICING FOR A MUSIC COMPETITION?
CAN I STAY AND WATCH? I PROMISE I'LL BE QUIET.
Ribbet
Ribbet
WE'RE JUST DOING EXTRA PRACTICE HERE, YOU KNOW NOTHING FUN.
That's OK.
WHAT'S OK?
BY THE WAY, MY NAME'S CHATTOU.
C-H-A-T-T-O-U.
I'M AN EIGHTH GRADER. NICE TO MEET YOU.

TRIANGLE
UH, WHAT'S THAT?
THIS? A TRIANGLE.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT WHY DID YOU TAKE OUT THE TRIANGLE?
?
BECAUSE I'M DOING THE TRIANGLE PART—
WHAT?!
THERE'S A TRIANGLE PART IN THAT PIECE?!
I WANT TO PLAY IT, TOO!
YOU CAN'T
WHY? IS IT A SOLO?
Heh heh heh
THE THING IS.

...
...THE TEACHER ADDED THE PART IN AFTER I ARGUED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRIANGLE
SORRY, YAN.
I'D BE TOO MORTIFIED TO EVEN ASK.
I guess I just have to work this out
YOU CAN TALK HIM INTO SQUEEZING IN CYMBALS OR MARACAS FOR YOU
I've done that before.
MAYBE IF YOU DO IT RIGHT,
screech
clink
screech
clink
clink

SCRUCH
...
clink
clink
clink
WE ALREADY TOLD YOU WE'RE DOING EXTRA PRACTICE.
OUR CLASS HAS AN ORCHESTRA TO PERFORM.
YOU LAUGH TOO MUCH, CHATTOU.
BONK
But.
Why are you guys the only ones practicing?
Hee
Hee
GOD! I WISH WHEN I WAKE UP TOMORROW, VIOLINS NO LONGER EXIST IN THIS WORLD.
And the violin parts turn into oboe parts or something
THE GUY HAS ISSUES CAUSE HE'S A TOTAL BEGINNER.
HMM.
WILL YOU CUT THAT OUT? GET REAL, PAL.
Why oboe?

BE OUR GUEST
I SHOULD BE HEADING BACK
CAN I COME AGAIN?
ANYWAY, DID YOU FIND THE SHEET MUSIC YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?
NO, I DON'T THINK IT'S HERE
WHAT'S THE NAME OF THE PIECE?
WE'LL KEEP IT FOR YOU IF WE FIND IT.
WHAT HE SAYS
Musique de chat!
(CAT MUSIC)

HOW WAS PRACTICE?
YOU GOT YOUR SCORE ALTERED SOME, RIGHT?
UH, YEAH IT'S SIMPLER NOW, BUT
BUT?
LET'S JUST SAY THE TEACHER'S DEFINITION OF "BEGINNER" CAN'T BE MORE DIFFERENT FROM OURS
CAN'T SAY I'M SURPRISED.
MAYBE I SHOULD ASK HIM TO REWRITE THE SCORE AGAIN.
ONE NOTE PER BAR.
YOU HAVE SOME NERVE.
That I can manage Probably
Not that it matters

"CAT MUSIC"? MUSIQUE DE CHAT?
OH, AND RALIM?
DO YOU KNOW THIS PIECE TITLED "CAT MUSIC"?
...
SOME KID WAS LOOKING FOR THE SHEET MUSIC
IF I REMEMBER RIGHT IT'S ONE WAY OF SAYING THE MUSIC IS SO OFF-KEY, IT SOUNDS LIKE A CAT YOWL-ING
ARE YOU SURE HE WASN'T MAKING FUN OF YOU?
He was talking about us?!
CRASH
HUH?

twang
OOH! HAVE YOU BEEN OVER-PRACTICING?
COURSE NOT.
THE STRING BROKE.
...

TULLI'S VIOLIN STRING BROKE. I'LL GO ASK THE INSTRUMENT DEPARTMENT.
WHAT'S WRONG?
AH, THANKS!
Side
HI THERE.
WILL THE VIOLIN SOUND FUNNY IF A BEGINNER GOES IT?
DO I HAVE TO REPLACE IT?
I THINK YOU CAN CHECK THE MANUAL FOR INSTRUCTIONS.

UH, I THINK I'LL BE OK
SUPER-NATURAL FORCES COULD BE AT WORK HERE.
BE CAREFUL.
slide
shut
Oh
Is that how you fix it?
Seems like it
RIGHT WHEN I WAS ABOUT TO PRACTICE, EVERY-THING HAD TO GO DOWNHILL. TALK ABOUT A BAD OMEN
DO YOU HATE MUSIC?
NO... I DON'T.
BUT RIGHT NOW, I WANT TO GO TO A WORLD WHERE VIOLINS NEVER EXISTED.
HE'S AT A DEAD END

TWANG
THIS MAKES IT THE FOURTH DAY IN A ROW...
...

AT THIS RATE, THE ONLY THING I'LL BE GOOD AT IS RESTRINGING VIOLINS.
Ha ha ha ha
PICK ONE, TULLI
IS IT THE WORK OF SOMEONE WHO ABSOLUTELY LOVES YOU OR SOMETHING SUPER-NATURAL?
NEITHER. THANKS!

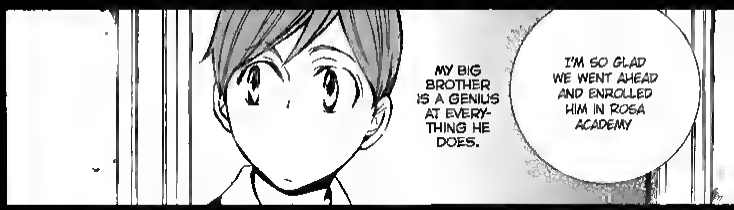
HIS STRING KEEPS BREAKING DAY AFTER DAY?
MAYBE... SOMEONE'S BEEN CUTTING IT.
THE FIRST ONE REALLY DID BREAK, I THINK
BUT THE ONES AFTER, THE "BROKEN" ENDS WERE TOO CLEAN TO BE ACCIDENTAL
AND THE WHOLE THING IS GETTING TO HIM?
THINK IT'S A PRANK?
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE HE'S GOT A SECRET ADMIRER
DOESN'T MAKE IT ANY LESS NASTY.
What kind of admirer?
AND TULLI IS THE TARGET? BUT THE VIOLIN IS SCHOOL PROPERTY IT'S NOT EXCLUSIVELY HIS.

I KNOW!
THE VIOLIN'S HAUNTED BY A VENGEFUL SPI—
shuffle
shuffle
DON'T EVEN GO THERE!
WANT ME TO READ THE CARDS?
Shut
MAN, WHAT A MESS
YEAH.
IF THE PRANKSTER KEEPS IT UP, WE'LL CATCH HIM EVENTUALLY
LATER, GUYS.
IN ANY CASE, I'LL KEEP MY EYES PEELED
WHOA.
WHAT?
HOW DID THIS END UP IN MY DECK?
IT'S WHITE—
A BLANK CARD.
NO PICTURES.
NO NOTHING.
...?

KITTY?
KITTY!
KIT--
MEOW
turn
...
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
HE WASN'T ALONE.
HAS HE FOUND FRIENDS?
GOOD FOR HIM.
I'M GOING TO MISS HIM. .
A LITTLE, THOUGH.
TULLI!
Mrrow!

I DIDN'T SEE YOU IN THE MUSIC ROOM, SO I FIGURED YOU ALREADY WENT BACK
OH, OK...
I looked everywhere for you
CHAT-TOUP!
BUT THE CAT DOESN'T NEED ME TO BRING HIM FOOD ANYMORE I THINK HE'S FOUND SOME FRIENDS.
HMM
OH, THIS? CAT FOOD.
WHAT'S THAT?
CAT?
YEAH, EVERYTHING'S FINE.
A younger kid is worried about me...
IS EVERY-THING ALL RIGHT?
YOU LOOK PRETTY DOWN THESE DAYS

HE IS TRULY...
AN ALL-ROUND-ER.
...


I'M SO GLAD WE WENT AHEAD AND ENROLLED HIM IN ROSA ACADEMY
MY BIG BROTHER IS A GENIUS AT EVERY-THING HE DOES.

HE CAN DO WHAT I CAN DO AND WHAT I CAN'T DO
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, TULLI
OUR BIG BROTHER IS ON A WHOLE DIFFERENT LEVEL.
THAT'S RIGHT
BUT DO THEY ALL WONDER WHY...
MY BROTHER IS AWESOME, AND I'M... NOT?
I'M KIND OF SLOW, TOO.

WHY BOTHER DOING SOMETHING I KNOW I'M GOING TO SCREW UP?
IF I PLAY IT SAFE,
MAYBE—
YOU MUST BE TIRED. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
HUH?
YEAH, I'M GOOD
I guess I am a little tired from the weird dreams I've been having. Being chased down by a bunch of violins, being cooped up doing nothing but stringing violins, stuff like that
EPIC.
Just hearing it makes me laugh.
YOU WERE ALREADY CONKED OUT WHEN I CAME INTO THE ROOM.
HUH? DID I. ?
I WAS?

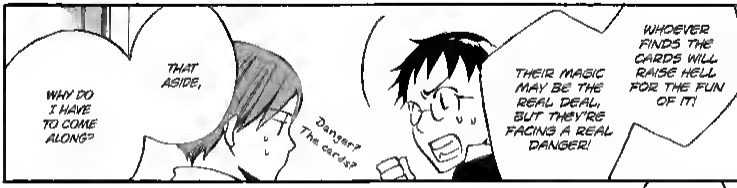
IT'S ALL BECAUSE
I GAVE UP TRYING..
THAT THINGS TURNED OUT THIS WAY.
IS THIS...
THE PRICE I HAVE TO PAY?
IT'S BEEN NEARLY A WEEK SINCE HIS STRING FIRST BROKE.

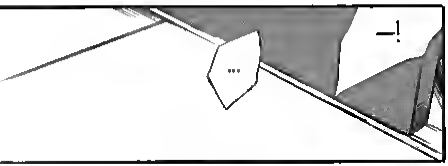
IT'S TIM
WE DID
SOMETHIN
ABOU

UGH, WHY DID I HAVE TO LEAVE MY NOTE-BOOK?
I WOULDN'T NEED TO GO GET IT BACK IF THERE WAS NO HOME WORK.
CLANG
THE MUSIC ROOM?
YAN AND TULLI JUST GOT BACK.
MUSIC 2
Clatter
Clatter

SLIDE
CLANG
clatter
...
Sneak
YAN!

I FORGOT MY TAROT CARDS
CAN'T YOU COME FOR THEM TOMORROW?
It's almost time for dinner
WHY ARE WE GOING BACK TO THE MUSIC ROOM?


WHY DO I HAVE TO COME ALONG?
THAT ASIDE,
Danger? The cards?
THEIR MAGIC MAY BE THE REAL DEAL, BUT THEY'RE FACING A REAL DANGER!
WHOEVER FINDS THE CARDS WILL RAISE HELL FOR THE FUN OF IT!


...
—!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHY?! WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE MUSIC ROOM HERE!
WHAT IF IT'S A GHOST THAT'S BEEN CUTTING YOUR STRINGS?!
IT'S STILL EVENING. GHOSTS DON'T—
SHAKE
SHAKE
CLANG

ARE THE VOICES COMING FROM THE MUSIC ROOM?
SURE SOUNDS LIKE IT. IS THERE A FIGHT IN THERE?
CARE TO EXPLAIN THESE?
slide
YOU STAYING QUIET WON'T GET US ANY-WHERE

YOU GUYS...
RALIM?
WHAT ARE YOU—
CHATTOU?!
HE'S OUR GUY
Me, hazing?
WHAT—
YOU KNOW HIM?
WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING??
HUH?
RALIM,
HE'S THE ONE WHO'S BEEN CUTTING THE STRINGS.
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF HAZING HIM
STOP IT
UH?

...?
WHY WOULD CHATTOU DO SUCH A THING?
TULLI'S GOT A POINT. I GET THAT YOU'RE LOOKING OUT FOR TULLI, BUT THAT KID--
FINE! YOU GUYS ASK HIM, THEN!
SIGH
ASK HIM WHY IN HELL HE WAS SNEAKING AROUND WITH A PAIR OF SCISSORS!
...
CHATTOU..

Nod
IT WAS YOU?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WERE UP TO, BUT YOU MADE TULLI—
CHILL, RAUM.
TAKE IT EASY.
BUT...
"WHEN I WAKE UP TOMORROW, "
YOU SAID SO YOURSELF, TULLI!
YOU SAID YOU DON'T WANT TO PLAY THE VIOLIN!
YOU SAID YOU WANT IT GONE!

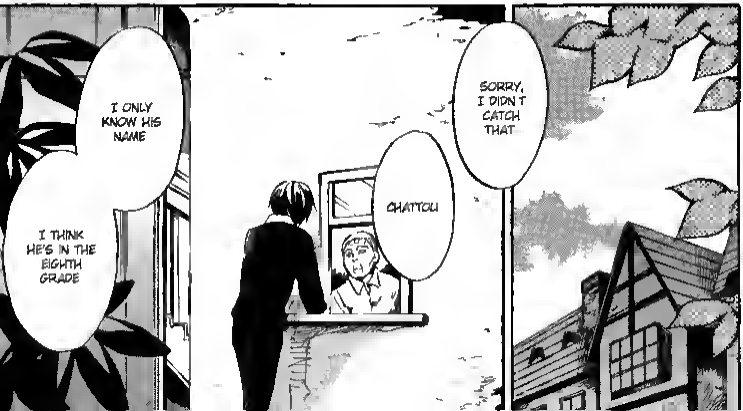
I'LL JUST FORGET IT EVER HAPPENED
SO I THOUGHT,
IF THE VIOLIN WAS IN NO SHAPE—
...
YOU CUT THE STRINGS SO TULLI WOULDN'T HAVE TO PLAY THE VIOLIN?
CRAZY, STUPID THING TO DO, BUT SOUND ENOUGH REASON
SO, TULLI,
THE REST IS YOUR CALL.
YOU FAIL WHEN YOU TRY SOMETHING. WHY BOTHER?
ALL ALONG...

I PRETENDED I DIDN'T KNOW, DIDN'T CARE.
I'M SORRY.
ALL THAT WHINING I DID...
DROVE YOU TO DO A BAD THING
BUT YOU CAN STOP WORRYING.
I CAN DEAL WITH THIS. I WON'T RUN AWAY.
THANK YOU.

ALL RIGHT, IF YOU SAY SO
PLEASE DON'T BLAME CHATTOU. IT WAS MY FAULT IN THE FIRST PLACE.
AND RALIM, I'M SORRY
THANKS.
UH, YEAH GOTTA FACE REALITY. OR SHOULD I SAY, THE MUSIC?
I'M STILL AT CAT MUSIC LEVEL, THOUGH
WHAT?
UGH!
NOW YOU CAN LOOK FORWARD TO PRACTICE SESSIONS WITH NO WORRIES!
pat

SOON YOU'LL NO LONGER BE A "CAT."
Cat...?
MUSIC?
The sheet music Chattou was looking for?
This guy didn't make the connection, either
AH.
YOU GUYS GO AHEAD. I NEED TO GO AROUND TO A CLASSROOM.
HURRY UP, RALIM.
MAN, LOOK AT THE TIME
WE'D BEST RUN TO THE CAFETERIA
CHATTOU'S?

I'LL TAKE IT TO THE DORM OFFICE LATER


I ONLY KNOW HIS NAME
I THINK HE'S IN THE EIGHTH GRADE
CHATTOU
SORRY, I DIDN'T CATCH THAT

Chat
THIS IS PROBABLY HOW YOU SPELL HIS NAME
CHAT? AS IN CAT?
NO.
CHATTOU.
THERE'S NO STUDENT HERE...
WITH THIS CAT-SOUNDING NAME.